

Amendments to the Claims:

The following listing of claims replaces all prior versions of the claims:

Listing of Claims:

1. (currently amended) A medical device comprising:
 - a body;
 - a lumen extending from a first lumen opening formed in the body to a second lumen opening formed in the body, ~~the lumen adapted to receive a length of suture;~~
 - a first needle guide channel extending from a first needle guide channel opening formed in the body to a second needle guide channel opening formed in the body; and
 - a needle connected to a length of suture and backloaded into the first needle guide channel, the length of suture being threaded through the lumen such that the needle will be advanced out of the first needle guide channel by pulling on the length of suture;

the medical device being configured such that the first needle guide channel opening and the second needle guide channel opening will be directly exposed to a patient's tissue when the medical device is used during a procedure.
2. (original) The medical device of claim 1, wherein the first needle guide channel is arcuate shaped.
3. (original) The medical device of claim 1, further comprising a handle coupled to the body.
4. (original) The medical device of claim 3, wherein the handle is coupled to the body by a connector piece.

5. (original) The medical device of claim 4, wherein the connector piece is bendable such that it can be fixed in a variety of positions.
6. (original) The medical device of claim 1, wherein a portion of the body is tapered.
7. (original) The medical device of claim 1, further comprising:
one or more additional needle guide channels, each extending from its own first needle
guide channel opening formed in the body to its own second needle guide channel
opening formed in the body;
wherein each of the one or more additional needle guide channels is configured in
operative relation with the lumen such that a needle that is backloaded into any of
the one or more additional needle guide channels will be advanced out of the
additional needle guide channel by pulling on a length of suture that is connected
to the needle and threaded through the lumen.
8. (original) The medical device of claim 7, wherein one of the one or more additional
needle guide channels are arcuate shaped.
9. (original) The medical device of claim 7, wherein each of the one or more additional
needle guide channels and the first needle guide channel is arcuate shaped.
10. (original) The medical device of claim 7, wherein the first needle guide channel and each
of the one or more additional needle guide channels are circumferentially positioned around the
body.
11. (original) The medical device of claim 10, wherein the first needle guide channel and
each of the one or more additional needle guide channels are equidistant from each other.

12-30. (canceled)

31. (currently amended) A medical device comprising:

a body;

a lumen extending from a first lumen opening formed in the body to a second lumen opening formed in the body, ~~the lumen adapted to receive a length of suture;~~

a first needle guide channel extending from a first needle guide channel opening formed in the body; and

a needle connected to a length of suture and backloaded into the first needle guide channel, the length of suture being threaded through the lumen such that when the length of suture is pulled in a first direction away from the body, the needle is advanced out of the first needle guide channel in a second direction, the first direction having a positive longitudinal component and the second direction having a negative longitudinal component.

32. (original) The medical device of claim 31, wherein the first needle guide channel is arcuate shaped.

33. (original) The medical device of claim 31, further comprising a handle coupled to the body.

34. (original) The medical device of claim 33, wherein the handle is coupled to the body by a connector piece.

35. (original) The medical device of claim 34, wherein the connector piece is bendable such that it can be fixed in a variety of positions.

36. (original) The medical device of claim 31, wherein a portion of the body is tapered.

37. (original) The medical device of claim 31, further comprising:

one or more additional needle guide channels, each extending from its own first needle guide channel opening formed in the body;

wherein the lumen and each of the one or more additional needle guide channels are configured in operative relation with each other such that when a length of suture is threaded through the lumen and is connected to a needle that is backloaded into one of the one or more additional needle guide channels, and the length of suture is pulled in a first additional direction, the needle is advanced out of the additional needle guide channel in a second additional direction, the first additional direction having a positive longitudinal component and the second additional direction having a negative longitudinal component.

38. (original) The medical device of claim 37, wherein one of the one or more additional needle guide channels is arcuate shaped.

39. (original) The medical device of claim 37, wherein each of the one or more additional needle guide channels and the first needle guide channel are arcuate shaped.

40. (original) The medical device of claim 37, wherein the first needle guide channel and each of the one or more additional needle guide channels are circumferentially positioned around the body.

41. (original) The medical device of claim 40, wherein the first needle guide channel and each of the one or more additional needle guide channels are equidistant from each other.

64. (currently amended) A medical device comprising:
a body;

a lumen extending from a first lumen opening formed in the body to a second lumen opening formed in the body, the lumen being substantially centered within the body ~~and adapted to receive a length of suture~~;

a first needle guide channel extending from a first needle guide channel opening formed in the body to a second needle guide channel opening formed in the body; and

a needle connected to a length of suture and backloaded into the first needle guide channel;

the medical device being configured such that the first needle guide channel opening and the second needle guide channel opening will be directly exposed to a patient's tissue when the medical device is used during a procedure.

65. (currently amended) The medical device of claim ~~1~~64, wherein the first needle guide channel is arcuate shaped.

66. (currently amended) The medical device of claim ~~1~~64, further comprising a handle coupled to the body.

67. (previously presented) The medical device of claim 66, wherein the handle is coupled to the body by a connector piece.

68. (previously presented) The medical device of claim 67, wherein the connector piece is bendable such that it can be fixed in a variety of positions.

69. (currently amended) The medical device of claim ~~1~~64, wherein a portion of the body is tapered.

70. (new) A medical device comprising:
a body;

a lumen extending from a first lumen opening formed in the body to a second lumen opening formed in the body;

a first needle guide channel extending from a first needle guide channel opening formed in the body to a second needle guide channel opening formed in the body; and

a needle connected to a length of suture and backloaded into the first needle guide channel, the length of suture being threaded through the lumen such that the needle will advance in a forward direction out of the first needle guide channel when the length of suture is pulled in a rearward direction.

71. (new) The medical device of claim 70, wherein the first needle guide channel is arcuate shaped.

72. (new) The medical device of claim 70, further comprising a handle coupled to the body.

73. (new) The medical device of claim 72, wherein the handle is coupled to the body by a connector piece.

74. (new) The medical device of claim 73, wherein the connector piece is bendable such that it can be fixed in a variety of positions.

75. (new) The medical device of claim 70, wherein a portion of the body is tapered.

76. (new) The medical device of claim 70, further comprising:

one or more additional needle guide channels, each extending from its own first needle guide channel opening formed in the body to its own second needle guide channel opening formed in the body;

wherein each of the one or more additional needle guide channels is configured in operative relation with the lumen such that a needle that is backloaded into any of the one or more additional needle guide channels will be advanced out of the

additional needle guide channel by pulling on a length of suture that is connected to the needle and threaded through the lumen.

77. (new) The medical device of claim 76, wherein one of the one or more additional needle guide channels are arcuate shaped.

78. (new) The medical device of claim 76, wherein each of the one or more additional needle guide channels and the first needle guide channel is arcuate shaped.

79. (new) The medical device of claim 76, wherein the first needle guide channel and each of the one or more additional needle guide channels are circumferentially positioned around the body.

80. (new) The medical device of claim 79, wherein the first needle guide channel and each of the one or more additional needle guide channels are equidistant from each other.

81. (new) A medical device comprising:

a body;

a lumen extending from a first lumen opening formed in the body to a second lumen opening formed in the body;

a first needle guide channel extending from a first needle guide channel opening formed in the body to a second needle guide channel opening formed in the body;

a first needle connected to a first length of suture and backloaded into the first needle guide channel, the first length of suture being threaded through the lumen such that the needle will be advanced out of the first needle guide channel by pulling on the length of suture;

a second needle guide channel extending from a third needle guide channel opening formed in the body to a fourth needle guide channel opening formed in the body;
and

a second needle connected to a second length of suture and backloaded into the first needle guide channel, the second length of suture being separate from the first length of suture, and the second suture being threaded through the lumen such that the needle will be advanced out of the first needle guide channel by pulling on the second length of suture.

82. (new) The medical device of claim 81, wherein the first needle guide channel is arcuate shaped.

83. (new) The medical device of claim 81, further comprising a handle coupled to the body.

84. (new) The medical device of claim 83, wherein the handle is coupled to the body by a connector piece.

85. (new) The medical device of claim 84, wherein the connector piece is bendable such that it can be fixed in a variety of positions.

86. (new) The medical device of claim 81, wherein a portion of the body is tapered.

87. (new) The medical device of claim 81, further comprising:

one or more additional needle guide channels, each extending from its own first needle guide channel opening formed in the body to its own second needle guide channel opening formed in the body;

wherein each of the one or more additional needle guide channels is configured in operative relation with the lumen such that a needle that is backloaded into any of the one or more additional needle guide channels will be advanced out of the

additional needle guide channel by pulling on a length of suture that is connected to the needle and threaded through the lumen.

88. (new) The medical device of claim 87, wherein one of the one or more additional needle guide channels are arcuate shaped.

89. (new) The medical device of claim 87, wherein each of the one or more additional needle guide channels and the first needle guide channel is arcuate shaped.

90. (new) The medical device of claim 87, wherein the first needle guide channel, the second needle guide channel, and each of the one or more additional needle guide channels are circumferentially positioned around the body.

91. (new) The medical device of claim 90, wherein the first needle guide channel, the second needle guide channel, and each of the one or more additional needle guide channels are equidistant from each other.